

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 268703

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:AR DAY:TH

APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

NEA - MR. ATHERTON

S/S: MR. SEBASTIAN

P - MR. HABIB

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 268703

EXDIS FOR CHARGE FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, LE

SUBJECT: TALKING POINTS

1. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE TALKING POINTS YOU SHOULD USE WITH THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS WHEN YOU GO TO EAST BEIRUT. THEY CONSIST OF POINTS TO BE USED WITH PERSONALITIES OTHER THAN SARKIS AND POINTS TO BE USED WITH SARKIS HIMSELF. IN TALKING WITH SARKIS, HOWEVER, YOU SHOULD ALSO GO OVER WITH HIM THE POINTS YOU ARE MAKING TO THE OTHER LEADERS. WE WILL OF COURSE BE INTERESTED IN AS FULL A PICTURE AS YOU CAN OBTAIN OF THEIR VIEWS ON THESE MATTERS.

2. BEGIN QUOTE:

TALKING POINTS FOR LEADERS OTHER THAN SARKIS:

-- WE ARE GRATIFIED THAT CIRCUMSTANCES IN LEBANON NOW MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR EMBASSY OFFICERS STATIONED IN BEIRUT TO RESUME DIRECT CONTACTS WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS AND WITH
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CHRISTIAN LEADERS IN EAST BEIRUT. WE VERY MUCH HOPE THAT

THE SECURITY SITUATION WILL CONTINUE TO IMPROVE SO THAT THE KIND OF REGULAR COMMUNICATION THAT WE HAVE MISSED AND THAT WE SO MUCH WANT TO HAVE WILL BE POSSIBLE.

-THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THE SITUATION SINCE HOUGHTON AND MACK VISITED EAST BEIRUT. SARKIS HAS BEEN INSTALLED AS PRESIDENT, THE MILITARY SITUATION ON THE GROUND HAS BECOME EVEN MORE ADVANTAGEOUS FOR THE CHRISTIANS WITH THE DISLODGMET OF PALESTINIAN/ LEFTIST FORCES FROM THE METN AND JEZZINE AREAS, AND MOST RECENTLY THE RIYADH AND CAIRO SUMMITS HAVE TAKEN IMPORTANT DECISIONS THAT, DEPENDING ON HOW THEY ARE IMPLEMENTED, CAN BE A FRAMEWORK FOR PROGRESS TOWARD A SOLUTION OF THE LEBANESE CONFLICT.

-- IN THE LIGHT OF THESE CHANGES, WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE ASSESSMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS OF THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY AND IN PARTICULAR HOW THEY SEE THEIR OWN SITUATION. HOW DO THEY REGARD THE PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUED POLITICAL PROGRESS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT?

-- WE WOULD BE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE ASSESSMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOUTH OF LEBANON. WE AGREE IT IS IMPORTANT TO AVOID A SITUATION IN WHICH THE PALESTINIAN GROUPS ONCE MORE BECOME DOMINANT IN THAT AREA. THE QUESTION IS HOW THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED.

-- FOR OUR PART, AS WE HAVE TOLD THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS, WE HAVE BEEN CONCERNED THAT IF THEY DID NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEIR PRESENT STRENGTH TO WORK NOW TO BRING AN END TO THE FIGHTING, THE ALIGNMENT OF FACTORS THAT HAD WORKED TO THEIR ADVANTAGE SINCE MARCH WOULD CHANGE AND THEY WOULD FIND THEMSELVES AT AN INCREASING DISADVANTAGE. WE HAVE IN PARTICULAR BELIEVED THAT THE SYRIANS, ONCE THEY HAD ACQUIRED SUFFICIENT CONTROL OVER THE PALESTINIANS, WOULD NO LONGER SUPPORT CHRISTIAN MILITARY ACTIONS AND, IF THE CHRISTIANS ATTEMPTED TO FOLLOW A UNILATERAL COURSE, MIGHT EVEN OPPOSE THEM MILITARILY.

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-- THE RIYADH AGREEMENT HAS PRECIPITATED THIS SITUATION. AS WE SEE IT, THE AGREEMENT CAME ABOUT BECAUSE THE LEADERS REPRESENTED AT RIYADH FELT THAT THEIR INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS WERE BEST SERVED, IN QUITE DIVERSE WAYS, BY ENDING THE FIGHTING AND SETTING IN MOTION A PROCESS LEADING TOWARD A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IN LEBANON TO CREATE A BETTER CLIMATE FOR OVERALL ARAB-ISRAELI SETTLE-

MENT EFFORTS. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THIS HAS FACED THE MARONITE CHRISTIANS WITH DIFFICULT DECISIONS, BUT IN THE LONGER RUN WE BELIEVE THEIR INTERESTS WILL BEST BE SECURED IF CONDITIONS OF CALM ARE CREATED IN LEBANON AND IN THE ARAB WORLD GENERALLY WHICH WILL FACILITATE THE

EFFORTS, TO WHICH WE ARE COMMITTED, TO MOVE MATTERS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM.

-- WE STRONGLY SYMPATHIZE WITH THE CONCERN OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY FOR ITS CONTINUING SELF-IDENTITY AND ITS SECURITY AND VIABILITY. WE DO NOT WANT TO SEE THE CHRISTIANS ABSORBED INTO MOSLEM SOCIETY OR DOMINATED BY IT. WE HAVE ENCOURAGED OUTSIDE SUPPORT FOR THE CHRISTIANS IN ORDER TO PREVENT THIS. WE ALSO AGREE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-INTERFERENCE BY PALESTINIAN GROUPS IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF LEBANON, WHICH WE RECOGNIZE IS OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. WE HAVE WARNED OTHER ARAB STATES IN THESE RESPECTS.

-- IN KEEPING WITH THIS CONCERN FOR THE WELL-BEING OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE LONG-RUN ADVANTAGE OF THE CHRISTIANS WILL BE BEST SERVED BY PRESSING AHEAD TO ESTABLISH SARKIS' ROLE AS THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY IN A UNITED AND INDEPENDENT LEBANON, SUPPORTED BY A LEBANESE SECURITY FORCE UNDER HIS CONTROL. IT IS OUR ASSESSMENT THAT A COMPLETE MILITARY VICTORY OVER THE PALESTINIAN/LEFT IS NOT FEASIBLE WITHOUT SYRIAN SUPPORT, AND THAT TO PROCEED IN SUCH AN EFFORT IN THE WAKE OF RIYADH WOULD SERIOUSLY RISK SYRIAN MILITARY OPPOSITION. A FLEXIBLE POLICY WOULD BE PRUDENT IN CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

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-- AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, WE ARE ALSO FULLY PREPARED TO HELP SARKIS AND HIS GOVERNMENT REBUILD LEBANESE INSTITUTIONS AND THE LEBANESE ECONOMY AND TO PLAY OUR PART IN HELPING TO EQUIP A LEBANESE NATIONAL FORCE AS THE CONFLICT IS BROUGHT TO AN END.

TALKING POINTS FOR SARKIS:

-- SECRETARY KISSINGER HAS ASKED ME TO SAY HOW GRATIFIED HE IS THAT YOUR POSITION HAS BEEN SO STRENGTHENED BY THE RIYADH AGREEMENT. WE HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT A SOLUTION FOR LEBANON MUST INVOLVE THE REESTABLISHMENT OF A STRONG CENTRAL AUTHORITY, AND AS WE STATED ON THE OCCASION OF

YOUR INAUGURATION WE CONSIDER IT ESSENTIAL FOR ALL PARTIES IN LEBANON TO SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN THE AUTHORITY OF THE NEW LEBANESE PRESIDENT.

-- WE RECOGNIZE THAT, HOWEVER PROMISING THE RIYADH AGREEMENT MAY SEEM, THE REAL TEST WILL COME IN ITS APPLICATION. SECRETARY KISSINGER WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO HAVE YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION AS IT HAS DEVELOPED FOLLOWING RIYADH AND OF THE PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUED PROGRESS TOWARD A SOLUTION. YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN A VERY HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY, ONE WHICH WE ARE PREPARED TO HELP YOU BEAR, AND WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW AS MUCH AS YOU CAN TELL US ABOUT THE PROBLEMS YOU FACE.

-- IN PARTICULAR, THERE APPEAR TO US TO BE THREE ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT ASPECTS IN THE APPLICATION OF THE RIYADH AGREEMENT: THE CREATION OF AN EFFECTIVE ARAB SECURITY FORCE; THE REMOVAL OF HEAVY WEAPONS FROM THE
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-- FOR OUR PART, WE ARE URGING THE LEBANESE FACTIONS, AS WELL AS THE INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS, TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AND FORTIFY YOUR POSITION AS THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY IN THE COUNTRY. SINCE WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE CHRISTIANS MAY FEEL THAT THE COMPROMISES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE A POLITICAL SOLUTION WILL TEND TO WEAKEN THEIR POSITION, WE ARE ALSO URGING THE OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES TO ENSURE THAT THE IDENTITY AND VIABILITY OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IS SECURELY PRESERVED. WE WANT YOU TO KNOW WHAT WE ARE SAYING IN PARTICULAR TO THE PRINCIPAL LEADERS OF THE MARONITE COMMUNITY (HERE YOU SHOULD REVIEW WITH SARKIS

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DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:WNHOWELL,JR.:GCB
APPROVED BY NEA:ARDBY
NEA/ARN:MDRAPER
S/S:DMACK

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UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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04 MAY 2006

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